



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EDT (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Thursday - December 26, 2002

- ***In the West***, scattered rain and snow showers are returning to ***northern California and the Northwest***, where pastures and winter grains continue to benefit from recent soil moisture improvements.
- ***On the Plains***, several hallmarks of El Niño are apparent, including below-normal temperatures and snow cover across ***southern areas***, and above-normal temperatures and a minimal snow cover in the ***northwestern half of the region***. As a result, the ***northern and central High Plains***' winter wheat remains mostly exposed to potential weather extremes, such as low temperatures and high winds.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, as much as a foot of snow cover from the recent winter storm is providing moisture and insulation for winter wheat in the ***Ohio Valley and the lower Great Lakes States***. Meanwhile, mild, dry weather favors off-season fieldwork across the ***upper Midwest***.
- ***In the South***, cloudiness is returning to the ***western Gulf Coast region***, although showers are confined to ***southern Texas***. Cool, dry weather prevails elsewhere, although wet fields continue to impede fieldwork.

Outlook: A major winter storm will move away from the ***Atlantic Seaboard***, allowing the ***Northeast*** to recover from the Christmas Day snow and wind storm. In the storm's wake, mostly dry weather will prevail through the weekend in areas ***east of the Rockies***. Farther west, however, significant precipitation will return to the ***Northwest*** later today and spread across much of ***California and the Intermountain West*** during the weekend. By early next week, showers and thunderstorms will return to parts of the ***South***, while snow is possible across the ***northern Plains and upper Midwest***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for December 31, 2002 - January 4, 2003, calls for above-normal precipitation in the ***Pacific Northwest, South, and East***, while drier-than-normal weather is forecast in the ***Southwest, northern Plains, and upper Midwest***. Above-normal temperatures are expected in the ***Pacific Northwest, northern Rockies, northern Plains, Midwest, and Northeast***, while colder-than-normal conditions will be limited to the ***Southwest***.

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